

Name: Marie Louise

Age: 16

Gender: Female

Occupation: Peasants (babysits 1st class's boy baby)

Social Class: 3rd class

Financial situation: Very poor, earns money monthly. one third of her money goes to her family to support their food supplies.

Appearance: Red hair, brown eye, and a little freckles. Thin arms and legs.

Location (Map of France, Map of Paris Must be in the Paris region: Paris, Versailles

Habitual locations: (where are you found most of the time?): In owner's house, baby's room. Her family lives in that house because her parents her peasants.

Daily routine: (typical day for you). I wake up early in the morning to check on baby and to cook something for the baby.

Personality/Quirks/Unique Personality Traits: I am very shy, but when I'm with my friends and my family, I'm very talkative.

Past/individual-family history: My grandparents didn't have any problem with money. However, their business failed and my dad started to work as a peasant when he grew up. Then he met my mom and started to work for this family.

Dad (Georges Louise) Mom (Jacqueline Louise)

Family: (spouse? siblings?...) I don't have any siblings or spouse.

Social relations with your own and other classes (people you deal with or know about in the class, AND your opinions and feelings about them): There is another girl babysitting. She just came so we're not that close, but I think she will be great friend.

Religion: Catholic

Education: I study by myself. I can read and write a little.

Languages you speak: French

Main privileges and/or hardships: Shortage of money.

Portrait: (find one online and paste it in):



<http://english.turkcebilgi.com/red+hair>

Prior to 1789, the year the French Revolution began, the only nations with any true understanding of the modern conception of human rights were Great Britain and its former colony, the United States. To those two nations, the most important rights were political and civil rights—the right to participate in government, freedom of expression, and equality before the law. Human rights also encompass economic and social freedoms—the right to move out of the class into which one was born, for example, and to no longer be dependent on another's whims for one's livelihood (as was the case in the eighteenth century for French peasants whose income fluctuated not only due to each season's crops but also to the number of payments their feudal lords decided to charge). During the last decades of the eighteenth century, two segments of French society—women and the Third Estate (France's middle-class and poor)—sought to gain all of these rights—political, economic, and social—which had been largely withheld from them. Their efforts to transform France from a nation dominated by the king, clergy, and aristocrats into one that took into account the needs of the entire nation helped lead to the French Revolution. The revolution significantly altered French society, but only for a decade—unfortunately, by the turn of the nineteenth century, when Napoleon Bonaparte ascended to power, France had mostly reverted to its old ways. Several more revolutions were required until France successfully established a republic, a government for all the people.

Life Before the Revolution

In the years before the revolution, French women enjoyed virtually no civil or economic rights. As Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson explain in the introduction to *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789–1795*: “By and large, women were legally totally subservient to their husbands or fathers in virtually all areas of marriage contracts, inheritance laws, property and tax laws, and child custody arrangements. Marriages were indissoluble.” Noblewomen were not permitted to rule on disputes on properties they held. Meanwhile, working women lacked economic rights and protections; many were concerned about the entrance of men into traditionally female occupations such as seamstress and embroiderer. These women feared that unless such employment was restricted to females, the “fairer sex” would have to look for less respectable jobs.

Women were not the only people in France who were denied basic human rights, of course. Indeed, France’s peasants lived under the worst conditions. Although industry was becoming a more important part of the nation’s economy, France was still largely dependent on the feudal system in which powerful feudal lords (seigneurs) owned profitable farmlands on which peasants lived and worked. Some peasants had managed to earn enough money from their crops to purchase their own small plots of land, but the vast majority lived in poverty, completely under the thumbs of seigneurs. In his book *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, nineteenth-century historian Alexis de Tocqueville details the burdens of the typical farmer:

Everywhere the resident seigneur levied dues on fairs and markets, and everywhere enjoyed exclusive rights of hunting. . . . [It] was the general rule that farmers must bring their wheat to their lord’s mill and the grapes to his wine press. A universal and very onerous right was that named lods et ventes; that is to say an impost levied by the lord on transfers of land within his domain. And throughout the whole of France the land was subject to quitrents, ground rents, dues in money or in kind payable by the peasant proprietor to his lord and irredeemable by the former.

Not only did the peasants owe rent and crops to their feudal lords, they also had to pay burdensome taxes to the government. By comparison, as Gwynne Lewis explains in *The French Revolution: Rethinking the Debate*, “The persistence of

feudal social structures meant that the real wealth of the country was not taxed: the great landowners, the Church and the nobility, escaped most of the taxes which fell upon land.”

Even peasants who were landowners were far from comfortable economically. As J.F. Bosher points out in his book, *The French Revolution*, the typical rural family of five required sixty bushels of wheat per year, “or with the triennial rotation of crops, about 15 acres of land for food.” However, the majority of French peasants — as much as 70 percent in the region of Cambrésis, for example— owned less than two-and-a-half acres of farmland. To make matters worse, France suffered several droughts and harsh winters during the 1780s, and French peasants were unaware of new, more efficient farming techniques; most used outdated tools and methods that dated back to the Middle Ages.

While some peasants could at least hope that they would grow enough grain to cover the money owed to their landlords and the government and provide food for their family, the urban poor— who, if not unemployed, worked primarily in factories and shops—were dependent on the affordability and availability of pre-baked bread. In the summer of 1787, a four-pound loaf, two of which were required daily to feed a family of four, cost eight sous. Due in large part to poor weather and low crop yields, by February 1789 the price had nearly doubled to fifteen sous. In his book *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, Simon Schama notes: “The average [daily] wage of a manual laborer was between twenty and thirty sous, of a journeyman mason at most forty. The doubling of bread prices—and of firewood—spelled destitution.” Urban workers, especially those in Paris, started to protest the price of bread. When two Parisian manufacturers, Réveillon and Henriot, suggested in late April 1789 that the distribution of bread should be deregulated, thereby lowering prices and reducing both wages and costs of production, riots ensued. Laborers—not only those who worked for bakers—took violent action against Réveillon and Henriot because they feared that other employers would use reduced bread prices as an excuse to cut their own workers’ wages.

Another sector of French society that began to protest unequal treatment was the bourgeoisie, or middle class. Unlike the rural and urban poor, this economic class, whose members would prove so important during the revolution, had already begun to gain economic and social status before 1789. As France’s

population started its migration from country to town and factories began to dot the urban landscape, capitalists and financiers saw their wealth steadily increase. Middle-class children had more access to education and culture, and their upbringing brought them in closer contact to the French aristocracy, resulting in many marriages between the upper and middle classes. However, the growing economic strength of France's middle class was not accompanied by equal political power. Bourgeois members of the Third Estate were particularly aggrieved by the fact that the votes in the Estates-General (a legislative body convened on rare occasion by the king) were counted by estate, not head. Thus the Third Estate often found itself outvoted by the First Estate (clergy) and Second Estate (nobility), which usually voted together for measures that furthered their interests at the expense of the needs of the Third Estate. However, the Third Estate had twice as many deputies as either of the other two estates. Thus, had voting been done by a head count, all a unified Third Estate would need was a single vote from either the nobility or the clergy to establish a majority. An increased political voice was for most middle-class French people the most important human right to be attained. Albert Mathiez, a leading interpreter of the revolution, says of the middle class, "They were advancing steadily [economically]. . . . Their very rise made them more acutely sensitive to the inferior legal status to which they were still condemned."

What life was for the different Estates and people on the eve of the French Revolution.

Before the French Revolution, neither women or peasants hardly had any rights in politics and in modern life. Women had to be totally obedient to their fathers and husbands. in all areas of marriage contracts, inheritance laws, property and tax laws and child custody arrangements. Noblewomen were not allowed to rule an argument on the properties they had owned. At the same time, working women lacked economic rights and protections. They were worried by an occupation of men in the field of traditionally female's job. They strongly pushed the idea of "fairer sex".

Women were not the only people in France who were denied basic human rights, of course. Indeed, France's peasants lived under the worst conditions. Although industry became one of the major part of the nation's economy, France depended largely on the

feudal system in which powerful feudal lords (seigneurs) owned profitable farmlands on which peasants lived and worked. Their income was chosen by seigneurs. And seigneurs chose the amount of peasants' income depended on the amount of crops they invested. They had to serve their owner 3 times day with bread and an wine. Some of them collected enough money to buy small land and crop; however, most of the peasants lived with their owner forever. They also had to pay high percentage of taxes to pay although they were living under their seigneurs.